

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 6-9, 12-15, and 18-22 remain pending in this application for which applicant seeks reconsideration.

Amendment

Independent claims 1, 7, 13, and 19-22 have been amended to further define and clarify that the keyword table includes a plurality of keywords having different levels of importance associated with at least one of a plurality of different images/contents. Moreover, these claims also define that at least one of the keywords also corresponds to at least another of the plurality of different images/contents. The one keyword has a plurality of levels of importance so that it has one level of importance associated with the one image/content and another level of importance associated with the another image/content. Dependent claims 2, 3, 8, 9, 14, and 15 also have amended to reflect the changes made in the parent independent claims. No new matter has been introduced.

Art Rejection

Claims 1-3, 6-9, 12-15, and 18-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Sano (USP 5,038,379) in view of Jones (USP 6,415,302). In this rejection, the examiner asserted that Sano discloses outputting images in the order according to the keywords associated with a plurality of different images and Jones teaches searching based on the levels of importance, and that the combination would allow Sano to simultaneously display a graphical representation of the searched images.

First, applicant thanks the examiner for granting an interview (held telephonically on 15 June 2006) with the undersigned. The undersigned has asked the examiner to include an Interview Summary with the next Office Action during the interview. During the interview, the independent claims, as similarly as amended, were discussed. Per the examiner's request, however, the independent claims have been reformatted, namely breaking down the first main clause to wherein clauses for improved readability and clarity.

Second, during the interview, the undersigned explained that the Sano/Jones combination would not have disclosed or taught the claimed invention, even if the examiner's assertion were deemed true for argument's sake. That is, although applicant still believes that the combination would not have been tenable and would not have taught searching based on the levels of importance of a keyword associated with a plurality of different images, the

combination certainly would not have disclosed or taught associating at least one of a plurality of images with a plurality of keywords having different levels of importance, and associating another of the images with one of the keywords associated with the one image, but with the level of importance of the one keyword being different for the one image and the another image.

For example, Image 1 can be associated with keywords A and B, with keyword A having a higher level of importance than keyword B. Image 2 also can be associated with at least keyword A for example. But the level of importance for keyword A associated with image 2 can be higher or lower than the level of importance for keyword A associated with image 1. When a search is made based on keyword A, Images 1 and 2 both can be retrieved since both of these images are associated with keyword A. If the level of importance of keyword A for Image 2 is set higher than that for Image 1, the order of the searched result will be Image 2 followed by Image 1.

Applicant submits that the Sano/Jones combination would not have taught the above searching technique, as presently set forth in the independent claims. During the interview, the examiner appeared to agree that the applied references would not have taught the claimed invention, but would require further search and consideration.

Conclusion

Applicant submits that the pending claims patentably distinguish over the applied references and are in condition for allowance. Should the examiner have any issues concerning this reply or any other outstanding issues remaining in this application, applicant urges the examiner to contact the undersigned to expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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22 JUNE 2006

DATE

/Lyle Kimms/

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REG. NO. 34,079 (RULE 34, WHERE APPLICABLE)

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